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The Commonweal

July 13, 1951

The Wetback Story

400,000 Illegal Entries from Mexico

WILLIAM KORCIK

The Communist Arrests

A Question of Free Speech

FRANCIS DOWNING

India: A New Constitution

JEROME D'SOUZA

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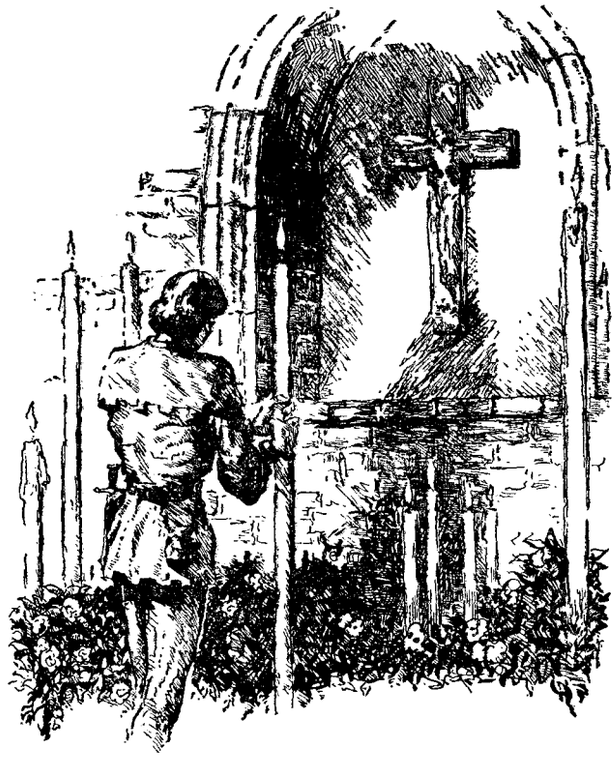

"Measuring Up" to a Saint

In France and England during the Middle Ages it was the custom of wealthy parishioners to donate candles tall as themselves for use on shrine altars.

This practice gave rise to the expression of "measuring up" to a saint.

People of moderate circumstances brought flowers and later, small candles—simple offerings which gradually evolved into the present day Vigil Light.*

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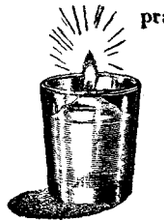

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The Commonweal

WEEK BY WEEK

Last Barrier

THE trial and prison sentence of Archbishop Groesz of Hungary follow a pattern that is sickeningly familiar. As in Hungary two years ago, with Cardinal Mindzenty, in Czechoslovakia and in Yugoslavia, the object of the proceedings was not so much forcibly to dislodge the leaders of the Catholic Church as to discredit them in the eyes of their people. These bishops in Communist States were charged with all sorts of treasonable crimes. There seem to be no limits to the fantasies of which the satellite authorities have accused them. Among the charges confronting Archbishop Groesz was that he was plotting to restore the long-since moribund Hapsburg monarchy; another or related "plot" was to bring in American troops to overthrow the Russian-backed Hungarian Government.

That is one phase of the pattern: to accuse the bishops of acts of treason that would alienate them from their people. Totalitarians have long known that a strong accusation alone will make an indelible impression on many minds. Charges by the State against a man, even when without foundation, will stick to him like a burr. His good reputation never will recover. But Soviet authorities are not content with that. By drugging, intimidation and treatment that they have found will destroy the power of the will, they force their prisoners to confess total guilt and even to "repent" before their judges. As far as the record goes, loss of a good name is complete, and, with all mass means of communication firmly in hand, the Communist regime succeeds in convincing great numbers of the people that their spiritual leaders have betrayed them.

To whom, then, can the Hungarians, the Czechs and the rest of the subject peoples turn in their travail? For primates such as Archbishop Groesz and Archbishop Beran served not only as spiritual leaders but also increasingly as symbols of the patriotic ideal in lands unwillingly losing their independence and identity. The clergy and hierarchy in the subject countries behind the Iron Curtain have comprised the last unyielding obstacle to complete taking over by the State. Even when compelled to remain silent on all political matters, their very presence among their people, their offering of the Mass and distributing of the Sacraments, was sufficient to keep hope and determination alive among the faithful. This was particularly true of the bishops, often national spiritual leaders.

Now they are removed from office, silenced. For the time being in the large and populous area behind the Iron Curtain the powers of this world have triumphed, even as such powers have subdued and persecuted down through the centuries. There are new martyrs and new catacombs. And whatever human failings may be partially responsible, the sufferings of these persecuted Christian leaders and of the flocks from whom they have been taken will weigh heavily in assuring a final victory which will be as lasting as it is certain.

The day of the satellites' liberation may be near at hand or it may be far off. But Christians of the free world will not be misled by the various Soviet allegations. What these bishops in the satellite and totalitarian countries are guilty of is standing firm on principle, upholding the doctrinal and ethical truths of the Faith, worthily representing the one force before which all the princes of this world will one day quail in terror.

A Beginning

IT was not long after the war broke out in Korea that American correspondents on the scene discovered that a great many of the GIs in the field had no very clear idea of why they had been called upon to fight a war in that faraway place against a foe who, to their way of thinking, was not the real public enemy No. 1. A few

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months later it was the top-ranking officer himself who became dissatisfied with his lot in Korea and the complaint he carried home was pretty much the same complaint that the GIs had expressed earlier. "There is no policy," said General MacArthur. "There is nothing, I tell you, no plan or anything."

The yo-yo war was what the GIs took to calling this war that moved up and down the peninsula, but there were signs, as time went on, that the American in Korea knew very well what he was doing in that country. When, a few weeks ago, a jet pilot came home from the war, a reporter from his home town, Wichita, Kansas, asked him why we were fighting in Korea. "So we won't have to fight in Wichita," was the pilot's reply.

Collective security is the term that Secretary Acheson probably would have used if he had been asked the same question. That, as Mr. Acheson has said, is the idea we have been trying to abide by all along, acting, as we have been, and as the jet pilot has been, in the sure knowledge that if the world is not a safe place for Ethiopians or Koreans to live in, it soon won't be a safe place for anyone else to live in either.

Korea was no Ethiopia. And that says a great deal. Korea was not another Ethiopia because this time we had a plan to put into effect, a plan of collective action, a plan that now gives the free world some real measure of promise that as it grows stronger, it need not again flee in fright from another Ethiopia to another Munich and on to another ultimate reckoning.

We did not fight in Korea a war to end all wars, we did not even fight with a slogan as sweeping as the Four Freedoms. The war in Korea had no such air of finality. And perhaps it was better that it did not have. The Korean war was waged, it seems to us, by men who knew full well that what they were doing was just the beginning, just the first engagement fought in behalf of a world community whose faint contours they could barely make out.

It was just as well that it should have been that way, because there seems now to be less illusion about the fact that what was begun in Korea will have to be completed, if the living are to keep faith with the dead.

• NEXT WEEK •

ARNOLD TOYNBEE writes of "The Impact of the West on Asia."

". . . there are two points about what is happening in Asia which some of us in the West may not yet have realized so clearly. The first point is that, in hitting us—as Asia is hitting us just now in the south Persian oil fields, among other places—Asia is not just hitting out; she is hitting back. The second point is that, in waking up, as she is waking now, Asia is not waking for the first time. Each of these points is, I think, worth looking into."

They're Toasted

THE Federal Trade Commission has ordered the American Tobacco Company, the makers of Lucky Strikes, to have a little more regard for the facts. It is not true, says the Commission, that Luckies are less irritating to the throat than other leading brands; it is not true that they are easy on the throat, or that they provide protection against coughing. Nor is there any "real basis" for the slogan that Luckies are preferred 2 to 1 by independent tobacco experts. So the Commission has ordered the Company to cease and desist from advertising these basic truths of the Lucky Strike creed. It's still safe, though, to say that Luckies are toasted, at least.

We have no fear at all that this order will put Mr. F. E. Boone and his fellow Lucky Strike lingoists and hawkers out of a job. On the contrary, the Company has responded to the order in a way that seems to indicate that we can expect the worst in the way of chants and emotional barbarism from the makers of Luckies, who are ever partial to the beat of the jungle in carrying out their advertising campaigns.

The company doggedly maintains that some of its "proven" statements were not judged false by the Commission but only "not significant." The Company believes that it is highly dangerous for us to allow a commission to decide what is significant in an advertiser's claims. The public should decide, says American, because otherwise a commission, not the people, will be able to decide "what truths may be advertised and what truths must be suppressed."

This sounds pretty weak, to say the least, when it is put beside some of the evidence produced by the Commission: "Of 440 of 1,184 persons claimed by the respondent (American) to be exclusive smokers of Lucky Strike cigarettes, approximately 50 did not smoke cigarettes at all. More than 100 of the 440 witnesses did not smoke Lucky Strikes exclusively, and a number of them smoked other brands exclusively." Now if

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American Tobacco were to have its way, it would be our job, and not that of a duly authorized commission, to dig up such facts as these. It would, we suppose, be up to us to carry around a chemical analysis set in our pocket in order to test the Company's nicotine claims.

But more than anything else, it rubs us the wrong way to see the American Tobacco Company—an outfit that has done its best for years to beat the human brain into a sensitive and helpless state of nervous exhaustion—setting up its defenses now on the high mental ground of "truth," just as though it knew the lay of the land. That, after all, is terrain familiar only to a thinking audience with some self-respect for its reasoning powers, terrain that the Company has been doing more than its share all these years to make bare, bleak and de-populated. The Company should know that it can't have it both ways.

Signs and Portents

WHEN he was first notified that the Communists in Korea had agreed to talk over a cease-fire, Emanuel Shinwell, Britain's Defense Minister, was reported to have said that this fact raised his hopes for a general relaxation of the Big Power tension. He said that rearmament was still necessary as a deterrent to war, but, he added, "at the slightest sign, we should be only too willing to curtail our activities and return to the arts of peace." It is perhaps unfair to place too much importance on a statement made in the first flush of enthusiasm, but certainly Mr. Shinwell's phrase, "at the slightest sign," is nothing but nonsense.

The Soviets are masters at making the most of "the slightest signs." A man in Mr. Shinwell's position should not, we think, be given to statements and possible illusions of this kind.

It will take all we can give it to bring Europe's defenses up to a state of bare readiness in the next couple of years. Mr. Shinwell seems to forget the months of futile wrangling just ended between the deputy Foreign Ministers at Paris. Mr. Gromyko did his best there to make it appear that the Atlantic Pact was offensive and not defensive in nature, trying all the time to break the European will to resist. Jacob Malik repeated this refrain in his recent cease-fire speech, indicating that what the Russians want most of all is to give us some "slight sign" that will cause us to relax and relegate the Atlantic Pact to a filing cabinet.

Mr. Shinwell would do better to recall that it was the almost incredible bravery of men like those in the Gloucester battalion that won a cease-fire in Korea. We have been given no indication that anything short of this bravery would have brought the Communists even to think about calling it quits.

It would be nice to believe that a general relaxation of the tension is in the offing. But it is our view that Mr. Shinwell had better check his signs and portents carefully before he decides to be "only too willing to curtail" the activities of self-defense "at the slightest sign" from an enemy who doesn't understand what the "arts of peace" are.

After the Storm

FROM time to time it seems that public common sense and plain fairness in this country are about to be swept away by some tornado of emotionalism or demagoguery. Then just as the storm reaches its height, there is a sudden change in the weather and all seems safe again. The list of American 'saviors' who have ridden the winds is a long and ignoble one. But one by one they have been passed up and forgotten, gone with the wind, often when they seemed to be on the verge of final success.

The past year or so has been stormy indeed. The MacArthur affair was one of those legendary big winds that will long be remembered. But things have calmed down considerably since the big parade. Even the most avid MacArthur partisans are now generally willing to grant that there were two sides to the story; not all regret that we are not today involved in an all-out war with China. And Dean Acheson at the moment is enjoying something of a respite from the abuse and hysterical charges heaped upon him day after day for months. The current maneuver being carried out by a few legislators who want to withhold the Secretary's salary and thus force him to resign, only shows up many of Acheson's enemies as the desperate people they are.

The most encouraging note of all is that Senator McCarthy is playing to empty houses and precious little applause. His attack on General Marshall, which would have been a sensation in the days when he was getting star billing at the Catholic Press Association convention and other surprising places, laid a big egg. If the Senator hopes to make a comeback he better pick up a new act.

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Something for Everybody

THERE in Carnegie Hall Mr. Blanshard had a good house. The gentlemen in evening togs, Mr. Blanshard among them, marched out on the stage. The audience stood and we all sang the "Star-spangled Banner." The meeting was under way. Very orderly, very proper. You might almost say very fashionable. This was no Columbus Circle or Bughouse Square crowd.

The first speaker was Dr. Edwin Poteat, an officer of Protestants and Other Americans United for Separation of Church and State. Dr. Poteat read his lengthy speech, and he read it well, considering the occasion. When he came to the quotations from papal documents, some of them quite old, his pulpit voice and manner turned suddenly dark and sinister. Then he was a little like a show-boat villain making an aside. The urbane Doctor was momentarily a Pope, and you know how *they* talk. All the Latin words helped too, giving just the right suggestion of medieval torture chambers and intellectual darkness. The people listening to him were as attentive and polite as a church congregation but they really came to hear Mr. Blanshard. He was the true star of the evening.

And after a flattering introduction, there he was. A pleasant-mannered, amiable sort with no trace of the bigot or the fanatic about him, completely at ease on the speakers' platform. Applause was enthusiastic and sustained, the way an old favorite or a new sensation is greeted at the Paramount.

Mr. Blanshard was considerably less formal than Dr. Poteat. For one thing, he didn't read his speech, he just talked. Especially at first he was tolerance itself, as when he warned his hearers not to let their antipathy to "political Catholicism" degenerate into hatred of their Catholic neighbors. With that out of the way, Mr. Blanshard sailed into his topic. *The* topic. Topic A.

From time to time he was the voice of scholarship, dazzling his hearers with Catholic quotations, which ranged from papal encyclicals to *Novena Notes*. Sometimes he was the righteous democrat who has taken just about all he intends to take from the Catholics, with their votes and their boycotts and their intimidation policies. Occasionally he was the hearty vulgarian, as when he made a slighting remark about the Catholic teaching on the perpetual virginity of Mary. This didn't go over so well with some sections of the audience. Mr. Blanshard's slip was showing, it seemed, and the more fair-minded of his hearers were embarrassed that he departed so far from the "political Catholicism" theme. A man near us jumped up and excitedly called out that there are Protestants too who hold this doctrine to be true. But the speaker on the stage couldn't hear him and he sat down after awhile, mumbling to all around that this sort of remark was uncalled-for.

At least once during the evening Mr. Blanshard got a real belly laugh. It was a vulgar, anatomical joke at the Pope's expense, and the scholarly comedian told it with timing worthy of Bob Hope.

In a word, at that meeting Mr. Blanshard tried to be all things to all men. There was a Blanshard for the dear old ladies who from childhood have nurtured fears of the Pope and the Jesuits. There was a Paul Blanshard for the intellectual liberals who pride themselves on knowing much more about the Catholic Church than people who have gone through 16 or 20 years of Catholic education. There was a Blanshard for the soap-box theologians and the cracker-box sceptics. There was one for the conservative Protestants. And even a Mr. Blanshard for the jolly fellows who can appreciate a good joke involving the sure-fire *derrière* theme.

Now and then the thought came to me that Paul was spreading himself a bit too thin. But he probably knew what he was doing. The name Blanshard means something in American life today, and to different kinds of people who have the one thing in common that they don't like the Catholic Church. The man has become the spokesman for a motley crew, and he seems to work on the something-for-everybody principle. Judging by his success he doesn't need any help from this corner.

But what was it to be a Catholic and sit quietly and listen to that stuff? Well, if you're a Jew and you ever listened to an anti-Semitic harangue—the kind that begins "Now there are good Jews and bad Jews and I'm sure the good Jews will agree with me when I say . . ." and ends with "It is ridiculous to call me anti-Semitic" —then you have an idea. If you are an American and have listened to Iron Curtain radio news reports, as I have, then you got the idea. You felt suddenly limp and helpless because much of what was being said about the United States on that radio was true but the total picture was false and you knew it.

Recent issues of four leading American magazines have run reviews of Mr. Blanshard's latest book: the *New Republic, Newsweek, Saturday Review* and the *Nation,* the last done by Norman Thomas. Each of the reviews treated Mr. Blanshard's studies as serious and unbiased and held they were unfairly labelled "anti-Catholic." But I know of no Catholic who would agree, from Jacques Maritain to the latest high school graduate.

Even the most critical Catholics, the most "liberal" of the "liberal" Catholics, to use the phrase that finds currency in these same magazines, are on record as believing that Mr. Blanshard has presented a distorted, biased caricature of their religious beliefs and has done so with sneers and snipings. Is all this universal Catholic testimony worth nothing?

If all Jews agreed that this or that was anti-Semitic, would these liberal magazines turn to the non-Jew for final judgment? Is it too much to ask that Catholics themselves be the judge of what is or is not a fair picture of Catholicism? There are Catholics in this country who have fought anti-Semitism, anti-Negroism and every other manifestation of bigotry. They have a right to ask that they and their fellow-religionists should be the judge of what is and is not anti-Catholic. In none of these four magazines—and there were more—was the book reviewed by a Catholic. Perhaps the well-informed Catholic would be deemed "biased," as a Jew discussing the "Protocols of Zion."

JOHN COGLEY.

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The Wetback Story

Mexican laborers are pushed and pulled across the border, only to become the sweatshop workers for our factories - in - the - field.

By WILLIAM KORCIK

NOT SINCE *Grapes of Wrath* days has America been confronted with the challenging agricultural labor problem it faces now.

The workers in this instance are not displaced farm families from the Dust Bowl, but Mexican nationals, most of whom pour unlawfully across the border. The illegals, or "wetbacks"—a name derived from their fording of the Rio Grande River—comprise 400,000 of our one million migratory laborers. Another 100,000 Mexicans have a legal status here.

The Mexican nationals are used chiefly on large-scale cotton, fruit and vegetable farms in the southwestern section of this country, particularly the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas and the Imperial Valley of California. To students of the problem, the word "wetback" itself connotes masses of Mexican illegals performing arduous stoop labor for cheap wages on lands intensely cultivated and producing high-value crops. In a real sense they are the sweatshop workers of our factories-in-the-fields—without the advantage of recourse to unions or local authorities. To seek correction of a grievance from anyone beyond the farm of their employment is to invite hasty deportation.

What brings the Mexicans north? On the one hand they are "pushed" by the bitter poverty of their own country, contrasted to the wealth of the United States, and on the other they are "pulled" by the growers' demand for a large agricultural labor pool. In the case of the wetbacks, many are lured by stories of ready jobs and high wages spread by grower agents.

Unemployment in Mexico is high and inflation deadly. Since 1939 the cost of living index has gone up to 354, compared to 184.6 in this country. One US dollar brings 8.65 pesos, more than many workers inside Mexico earn in a day.

The Mexicans prefer to come into the United States as contract workers under the US-Mexico Agreement, first signed in 1942 and last renewed in 1949. But if they are unable to get certified, mere technicalities will not hold them back. When a federal judge asked a wetback, "Don't you respect the laws of this country?" the illegal replied, "Our necessities know no law." Furthermore, there is always the possibility of being legalized and placed under contract once the Mexican gets inside this country.

Although the provisions of the contract—specifying that the workers shall not be employed in areas where they are discriminated against because of "nationality or race," and guaranteeing eight hours pay for eight hours work, decent shelter and sanitary facilities, medical care and round-trip transportation—have repeatedly been violated (causing one-fourth of the nationals to flee their employers and become illegals), the lot of the wetbacks is far worse. Every discrimination suffered and every problem posed by the contract workers is a hundred times multiplied by the exploitation of the defenseless illegals.

To many growers—to whom contracting means red tape, added expense and the establishment of conditions considered unthinkable for native field hands—wetbacks are the most desirable workers. Without the eagerness of the growers to hire the illegals, the number of unlawful entries would decline swiftly and sharply.

★

THE wetback invasion began shortly after 1944. In the preceding decade, an average of less than 10,000 Mexican nationals a year were deported or permitted voluntary departure. By 1950 almost 500,000 illegals had been apprehended. This year the number is expected to double.

Returning an illegal does not mean he "stays put." Aliens removed from farms have been back at their furrows before the immigration men returned to their station. I know an old man from Vera Cruz who has been returned 25 times, his son 23 times.

The Border Patrol has only 900 men to guard a 1,600-mile line between Brownsville, Texas and the Pacific Ocean. In California, where there is no river to cross and where the aliens call themselves "Alambristas" (wire-jumpers), an estimated 1,000 a day slip across the open boundary and filter into the interior, some to perish on the desert between the Imperial Valley and Yuma.

WILLIAM KORCIK is a free lance journalist who lives in San Diego, California.

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It is common knowledge that the Immigration men often permit wetbacks to work unmolested on farms. "With so few men at our disposal," a San Diego Border Patrol inspector told me, "we can't be everywhere. Our strategy is to keep the aliens from penetrating the Salinas and San Joaquin Valleys. If they're working, they're not moving north. When the job is over we know about it and we return them."

Governor Warren's Committee to Survey the Agricultural Labor Resources of the San Joaquin Valley called upon him, "in concert with other western governors, [to] request the Federal Government to increase its border patrol. A better integrated state and federal program," said the committee, "is desirable since the entrance of illegal aliens is a problem of mutual concern."

★

THE stories of illegals who make the long trek from the interior to steal across the border so that they may find work and send money home to their needy families parallels in determination the sagas of our heroic '49'ers. It is not unusual to meet a man who has walked a thousand miles, often over treacherous terrain. Dr. C. R. Kroeger, Imperial County Health Officer, says of the illegals, "They display the same courage and fortitude which have been proclaimed as the 'backbone of the American Nation.'"

The incidence of crime among the aliens is low, contrary to lurid reporting. They seek to stabilize themselves here and scores have found work in the auto and steel industries. Once established, they send for their families to "wetback" it north.

Once in the United States, the hunger and fugitive status of the illegals compels them to work for whatever they can get and to endure such living conditions as can charitably be termed "primitive." Because of their plight and their tremendous numbers, they pose sharp and immediate economic, social and health problems.

In the Lower Rio Grande Valley, where the greatest concentration of illegals has taken place, the wetbacks work for as little as 15 cents an hour. In the Imperial Valley they average 40 cents an hour, contrasted to the prevailing rate of 60 cents paid contract workers. (In the San Joaquin Valley, where very few Mexican nationals are employed, wages are 25 to 40 cents an hour higher than in the Imperial).

The President's Commission on Migratory Labor, which found that cotton wages in Texas and California had a striking correlation to the number of contract workers employed (the fewer importees the higher the wages) reported that "the Imperial Valley, with its large wetback traffic, represents a substantial contradiction to an otherwise general tendency for farm wages to improve toward the west."

Various devices are used by the growers to retain their wetbacks until the work is done. A favorite trick is to hold back a substantial part of the wages so that the field hands, if apprehended, will make sure to return promptly.

The more unscrupulous employers call upon the Immigration men to remove the wetbacks without paying them, when the job is finished.

The Deputy Labor Commissioner of San Diego County, who collects thousands of dollars a year for defrauded illegals, said: "[This practice] has been increasing. . . . The scheme has reached racket proportions in some sections of San Diego and Imperial Counties. There is a deliberate conspiracy to swindle aliens of their wages."

By reporting the chiseling employers to the nearest Mexican consulate, the illegals can obtain their wages—but many are not aware of their rights.

Living conditions for the wetbacks were described by a witness before the President's Commission, as follows: "I have seen, with my own eyes, people living in these shacks and sheds, getting their water to use, drink, and cook with, out of irrigation ditches, no type of sanitary facilities, bathing or toilet facilities of any kind in sight; living in shacks that I wouldn't put a horse in."

The Deputy Labor Commissioner in El Centro said: "I have seen lots cleaner and better chicken houses. . . ."

★

FEW GROWERS are concerned about the wetbacks or the problems they create. They only know that the illegals offer them a large, cheap, hard-working and docile labor force to hire and exploit without responsibility or penalty. As Dr. Kroeger says, "Eonomic pressures in both directions underly the problem."

The illegals are not confined to agricultural work. They do gardening, wash dishes, drive trucks, load boxcars, work in sheds, etc. They are found on jobs which traditionally have gone to union men, as in the building trades. The secretary of the San Diego Federated Trades Council told me: "Our number one problem is to stop building contractors from hiring starvation-wage wetbacks instead of men from the building trades unions." The illegals paint, plaster, lay bricks and do carpentering for as low as one-fourth the union scale.

The indiscriminate use of wetbacks is causing resident workers, forced out of jobs, to hit the road as migrants. In the Imperial, where the slogan of the Mexican Americans is "Mucho trabajo, poco dinero" (much work for little money), I talked with dozens of "locals" who were seriously considering leaving the valley. Some had

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lived there for 20 years, and had built little homes.

In this area, where practically the entire stoop labor force is of Mexican origin, the locals bitterly resent the intrusion of the illegals and, during the recent National Farm Labor Union strike, picketed the border. They even pulled wetbacks off farms and turned them over to the Immigration men. They were assisted on the Mexicali side by the Mexican Agricultural Workers Union.

J. S. Castillo, publisher and editor of Mexicali's influential *El Regional,* declared: "A law making it a crime for a farmer to hire a person who had entered the United States illegally would stop this illicit movement and the smuggling of aliens." Such a bill is proposed in S. 984, now before the U. S. Senate.

The Mexican communities along the border have been unable to cope with the staggering problems created by the two-way flood of migrants, coming from the south and being returned. They have no money to feed the hungry and provide shelter for the homeless. Mexicali, for example, has experienced a vast and unnatural growth of population, resulting in the appalling "Nuevo Pueblo" slum, one of the worst on the continent.

In an unselected survey, Dr. Victor Slim found 16 per cent of the population of Mexicali to be infected with syphillis, a phenomenon Dr. Kroeger attributes to the upset social conditions created by the wetback traffic.

The health problem caused by the illegals in the United States has created alarm among border doctors. In a searching medical report, "Significance of Tuberculosis in the Itinerant Mexican Laborer," Dr. Kroeger writes: "There are 1.2 active cases of Tuberculosis per 1,000 of our Mexican aliens [twice the US rate] and if only 250,000 Mexicans [an understatement] are working in the United States at present, it means 300 active cases infiltrating our public and producing ultimately a minimum of 1,500 active cases in our resident population."

Figures on other diseases carried and spread by the illegals are equally impressive, making the wetback areas of Texas and California the sickest in those states. The illegals enter without medical examination, of course, and carry with them uninspected fruits, vegetables and unboned meats.

★

EVERYONE wants the Mexican migratory labor problem solved—but each in his own way. The just solution, not yet worked out, would have to give job preference to Americans, protect the contract workers from abuse, discourage the hiring of wetbacks, seal the border and place the task of carrying out an overall agricultural labor program squarely in the hands of one federal agency—free of pressure from any quarter.

FROM INDIA

A New Constitution for an Old Land

"THE ink is scarcely dry on your new Constitution, and you are already busy tinkering with it!" So said a distinguished Indian scientist to me recently, a man known for his caustic comments on public affairs. This attitude, common in India, must be even more common in Europe and America. Among the amendments proposed, and now carried out by the Parliament of India, there was one which empowered Government to introduce measures which will restrict the freedom of expression guaranteed as a Fundamental Right in our Constitution. More than the other clauses of the Amending Bill, this has been the target of the strongest criticism from all sections in India, because it was looked upon as a first step in the effort to control the Press by a Government which is accused of acting more and more in a dictatorial manner. A prominent newspaper in America expressed surprise that Nehru, who had spent so many years in British prisons to secure full liberty for his people, should be the one to introduce this measure to curtail that hard-won liberty. It is therefore necessary to explain to our friends in America the contents and significance of this Amending Law. This will help to explain not only this particular measure but a good many other features of political life in India which must appear obscure to the normal student of public affairs in Europe and America.

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IF WE omit clauses of minor importance about which there has not been serious difference of opinion, the amendments contain three principal points round which controversy has raged. The first is the amendment to Articles 15 and 29 of the Fundamental Rights which guarantee to every citizen equality before the law, and the assurance that in securing employment or admission to educational and technical institutions conducted by the State, no discrimination will be made on grounds of race or caste or religion. The amendment provides for special protection and assistance to members of depressed and backward classes in these matters.

The second point deals with Article 19 which guarantees the right to property and to equitable compensation in case of acquisition of property by Government. Another clause of the same article guarantees freedom of speech and expression. The amendment to this has two parts. First, it enables Government to nationalize particular industries, and even, in fact, to monopolize

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them and exclude private competition, if it is judged necessary for the common good. Secondly it empowers Government to introduce legislation to place reasonable restrictions on liberty of speech and expression.

The third important point in these amendments deals with Article 31 which is also about right to property. In this case it is the right to landed property. The acquisition by Government of large estates, known as zamindaris, with payment of compensation to the owners, for purposes of redistribution among the landless peasants, had been foreseen in the Constitution and had been accepted as an essential point in the program of the national Government. But the wording of the clauses in the original Constitution had left certain loopholes; and measures for the abolition of these large estates, passed by certain State Governments, had been challenged in the High Courts and declared unconstitutional. The amendments sought to validate both the acts hitherto passed and similar acts to be passed in the future.

The Indian Constitution is based upon the democratic ideals which India's contact with the West over the last two centuries, and particularly her apprenticeship in representative government which England had introduced in some measure even before full independence, had enabled the nationalist leaders to appreciate and adopt. The Constitution, drawn up by some of the ablest constitutional lawyers and leaders of the country, was based upon the unwritten Constitution of England and the written Constitution of the United States.

India deliberately chose this path of democratic freedom. But the Constitution-makers were fully aware that the religious and political evolution of India had created a society in which grave social and economic wrongs were perpetuated. No narrow interpretation of fundamental rights and equality before the law should be allowed to prevent the nationalist leaders from attempting to right those wrongs and introduce a more just social order. The social abuses in a semi-feudal and caste-ridden country should not be maintained by constitutional safeguards. Hence, agrarian reform, and special protection for backward classes, were foreseen, and it was believed, provided for, in the Constitution. Moreover, the experience of the war and the communal discord in India, which had led to the partition of the country, had convinced even the most democratic leaders that in an emergency liberty of expression might have to be curtailed. This too, it was believed, was suffiiciently provided for in the qualifying phrases and clauses in the original articles embodying the Fundamental Rights.

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ON THE strength of those provisos and with the knowledge of what was in the minds of the makers of the Constitution, several Provincial or State Governments introduced measures on these points, to suit the conditions obtaining locally: measures for the suppression of zamindaris, for the special protection of depressed and backward classes, and for the control of freedom of expression and political agitation in areas where Communistic or communal—that is, religious—discord was feared. These measures were challenged in the High Courts of the Provinces concerned and, in one instance, in the Supreme or Federal Court. In most cases, the judges, with a courage and impartiality which is fortunately still a strong tradition in the Indian Courts, declared against the State enactments. What Government and the Congress Party considered to be urgent measures of social reform and assistance to the poor had to be interrupted. Certain political and social agitators who had been arrested and condemned on the strength of those laws had to be liberated under orders from the Courts.

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THE first reaction of the Central Government was shown by the introduction of the Preventive Detention Bill in February, by which Government sought and obtained powers, as an emergency measure for a year in the first instance, to arrest and detain without formal trial persons suspected of conspiring to disturb public order. The Bill was aimed primarily at Communist agitators and saboteurs. It was passed, though not without serious opposition, and with important modifications limiting and controlling the arbitrary power of Government. The second step was the introduction of the Bill to Amend the Constitution, sponsored by the Prime Minister, Mr. Nehru, and passed in May after animated and sometimes heated discussion. It became law with the assent of the President at the beginning of June.

The Bill was attacked with force and sometimes with vehemence on the three important points which I have indicated. Among the dissenters, the main contentions were that there is no urgency in this matter, that Government had not tried all the means available to it for securing the passage of its social reform schemes by further appeals to the Federal Court and by modified projects of law in harmony with the wording of the Constitution, that this hurry and apparent lightheadedness with which amendments to the Constitution were undertaken would set up a dangerous precedent and thus an important element of stability in the country would lose part of its force. Moreover, they attacked in particular the too sweeping nature of the powers sought by Government and not justified by the necessities of the situation. They feared that nationalization of industries and acquisition of land would discourage individual initiative, prevent the flow of capital into business, and make the State autocratic. Above all they attacked the clauses dealing with freedom of expression and cited the almost unanimous opposition of the entire Press of the country, even of those nationalist papers which had hitherto consistently supported Government. It was said that there was no emergency justifying such an amendment. The laws on the statute book were said to be sufficient to meet ordinary dangers if the Government was patient enough to seek redress in courts.

There is no doubt that there was a good deal of substance in many of these arguments. They were partly met by modifications in the Bill made by the Select Committee after the first reading. The most important of these modifications was the introduction of

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the word "reasonable" before the word "restrictions" with regard to control of freedom of expression. This places every law made on the strength of this amendment under the jurisdiction of the High Courts, and severely curbs any official tendency to arbitrary exercise of power. For the rest, the Prime Minister was able to make out a convincing case for the amendments.

The abolition of the zamindaris is a reform of long-standing urgency to which the Congress Party was committed from the earliest days of the nationalist movement. While landlordism has never assumed in India the cruel and utterly exploiting character of landlordism in China, for instance, there is no doubt that the hard-worked tiller, pressed down by rents and taxes and chronically in debt to usurers, is in urgent need of emancipation if he is not to be swept away into a mighty movement of agrarian socialism. The landlords, or the zamindars, have resigned themselves to the change and although there has been difference of opinion and discontent regarding the compensation paid, there has not been much opposition from them.

The special assistance to backward classes is also something about which there has always been general agreement. But the difficulty came when it had to be decided which sections, castes, and subcastes belonged to backward classes, and whether special reservation of seats for them in educational institutions should be part of the protection to be given to them. This last point might seem trifling to the American reader but it has a capital importance in India, where higher institutions of learning, and especially professional colleges like those of medicine and engineering, are not able to cope with the immense demand for admissions. They are mainly conducted by Government, since the technical equipment needed for them is above the financial capacity of private agencies. That every kind of protection should be given to the most backward, namely the "untouchables," and the aborigines, was obvious. Should other classes who were socially and educationally backward, while still belonging to respectable "castes," be included in this provision? In the State of Madras the demand for this was insistent. Here the Brahmin community, already very high in literacy and culture, would secure all the coveted seats by virtue of their recognized facility for university studies. This would certainly perpetuate in all its acuteness a grave social problem full of political dangers. Hence these backward classes were included in the ameliorative provisions of this clause.

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A POINT of interest for Catholic readers is that our demand to the effect that converts from the depressed classes should also be considered "backward" and given the assistance which their Hindu kinsmen are securing, has been considered sympathetically by the Central and State Governments. Though it is, as yet, too early to say that they will secure the full measure of assistance which is due them, it is being more and more recognized that their conversion does not bring about their economic salvation and that they have a right to special protection though they belong to a religion that does not recognize caste. It is to the credit of the Governments that the same recognition and assistance is being given to backward elements among the Muslims also.

The amendment regarding freedom of expression was the one that encountered the strongest opposition. And it was on this point that Government made its most important concession, namely that the restrictions placed should be "reasonable." And since the amendment is only an enabling measure and every project of law by any of the States will have to stand the test of an appeal to the High Courts, there is little danger of the very wide degree of liberty which the Indian Press enjoys being seriously curtailed. But even so, it is not a happy sign that such restriction should be contemplated. Moderation in the expression of political criticism should be taught by sound and slowly built up traditions and not by Government orders. Hence the amendment and the laws which it will make permissible should be accepted only if there is something of an emergency in the country. Government's case is that a certain emergency does exist at the present time.

It is certain that the harshest critics of the Congress Government, the papers and sheets that have abandoned all measure and decency in attacking personalities and policies, have been inspired for the most part either by Communist sympathies or by the bitter anti-Muslim feeling that is common to certain extreme Right-Wing sections among the Hindus. Foreign observers have noted that criticisms of Government, even by papers affiliated to the Congress Party, have been surprisingly outspoken from the very first days of independence. But Government has not seriously minded these criticisms and generally admitted their justice. But more recent outbursts by the type of Press that I have indicated have been violent and vulgar to a painful degree. In a country where the masses have not been trained in democratic ways and where they can not make the distinction between Government and the persons who exercise governmental authority, such a Press may do incalculable harm. We may be sure that the force of such laws as may be passed in the wake of this amendment will be chiefly directed against those papers which either habitually denounce India's "subservience" to the Democratic bloc and ask for an open alignment with the Soviet bloc, or stir up feelings against Pakistan and the Muslim community and demand that Mr. Nehru's "appeasement" of them should cease.

At the end of the debate Syama Prasad Mookerjee made a strong speech which showed that his opposition had not been softened by anything that had been said in defense of the measure, a speech which provoked the Prime Minister to some angry and not less strong declarations. But the House as a whole felt that a reasonable case for the amendments had been made. They were carried by formidable majorities, the highest figure secured by the opposition being 20 against the restrictions on freedom of expression, in a House of 300 members.

JEROME D'SOUZA.

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The Communist Arrests

THE self-appointed disciples of Justice Holmes have become exercised over the latest opinion of Chief Justice Vinson, and they find liberty truly defended only in the dissenting opinions of Messrs. Douglas and Black. They regard Justice Holmes as betrayed, and they seek refuge in the belief that our Communists are in no position to overthrow our government. Such a man as Max Lerner goes so far as to accuse our Chief Justice of hypocrisy. I find all this a little difficult to take. Surely debate ought to proceed at a higher level than that.

The United States was created by, and founded in, revolution. It is in revolution that our government grounds its legitimacy. It was the opinion of Jefferson that "the tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time, with the blood of patriots and tyrants." It was his position, too, that whenever government becomes destructive of the ends which he set down, "it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it." Lincoln took the position that whenever the people "shall grow weary of the existing government, they can exercise their right of amending it, or their revolutionary right to dismember and overthrow it."

It is impossible to believe that these men did not mean what they said. It is difficult, in any practical way, to make sense out of Lincoln's words; but belief that men have a natural right to rebel is the only moral sanction I know of against tyranny. At any rate, it is clear that Jefferson assumed a government destructive of liberty, and that both he and Lincoln assumed action by the people. Obviously the government of the United States is not systematically destroying liberty; and the Communists do not represent "the people" of the United States. That the Communists are not a political party, but are in fact a political conspiracy geared perfectly to the interests of the Soviet Union, is palpable and demonstrable.

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THE only question remaining for our Supreme Court was whether the Communists were conspiring to overthrow our government by force and violence, and whether the Smith Act was constitutional. Justice Frankfurter made some stingingly severe criticism of what he called our "preoccupation with constitutionality." With it, as a judgment, I agree. Nonetheless we appeal cases to our Supreme Court to test, among other things, whether or not specific, and often unliked, legislation can have constitutional life. There is no other way to find this out—no other body whose sanction we can seek. So long as we function as a constitutional government, some body of men must make this ultimate judgment.

Such a government as ours, drenched as it is in revolutionary sentiment, is always delicately poised. It is not only engaged in establishing what Woodrow Wilson called "equipoises of power;" it is engaged in ceaselessly reconciling liberty with authority. One of the most firmly set and abiding of our liberties is freedom of speech. It is certainly not too much to say that this is a major freedom: upon it the exercise of all other liberties depends. Even religious liberty, as Lord Acton pointed out, is a condition of civil liberty. All civil liberty is gemmed about by the freedom to speak.

But just as we must allow freedom of speech, so we must set some limitation upon it. Justice Holmes' remark that a man cannot falsely cry "Fire" in a crowded theatre is long since famous. How, though, and at what point, you modify my freedom of speech is a constantly teasing question. It is an abiding question, the answers to which are never permanent. For speech is the product of the human mind, and the work and response of the human mind are not predictable. Besides, events destroy old formulae, and the rules of an older day, like hand-me-down clothes, seldom fit. There is no IBM machine for revising and correcting the now inapplicable. We must—and do—imploringly go to the Courts.

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LIKE the head of King Charles, Justice Holmes keeps getting into any essay on freedom of speech, because he tried to fix, with some precision, a test by which liberty of expression could be restricted. We call it "the clear and present danger test." Holmes wrote that the question was "whether the words used are used in such circumstances and are of such a nature that they will bring about the substantive evils that Congress has a right to prevent." You will admit that that is both a broad and debatable rule. But there it is: it is as close as anyone has ever come to precision on so fluent and nebulous a matter as the meaning and power of words. Where do our words intimately threaten the structure of our society, or of one of our institutions? That is a question to which no wholly satisfactory answer will ever be given, this side of Paradise. But that men will go on questing an answer, and that wavy and imperfect answers must ceaselessly be given, are things which inhere in, mark and illustrate democracy.

But it is a pity, I think, that we chose to deal with the Communist conspiracy through the Smith Act. That Act makes it punishable "to knowingly or wilfully advocate, abet, advise, or teach the duty, necessity, desirability, or propriety of overthrowing or destroying any government in the United States by force or violence . . . or to organize or help to organize any society, group, or assembly of persons who teach, advocate, or encourage the overthrow or destruction of any government in the United States by force and violence."

Such language, it seems to me, creates an unusual judicial predicament. Once you decide that men are culpable, who teach and advocate the overthrow of our government by force and violence, you raise the question not only of the intent of their words, but of their immed-

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iacy. Do the words of such teaching and such advocacy threaten *now* our structure? Do they compose a "clear and present danger" to our institutions? About that superior minds will disagree. In fact the Supreme Court ruling on the Communists produced five separate opinions, two of which dissented from those of the majority. For a man like Max Lerner, who frequently and superciliously talks about "little minds" and "little men," one might expect a charge of hypocrisy. But it is enough to point out the difficulty of decision. Save to mention this: those who attack Vinson did not attack, but do praise, Mr. Justice Learned Hand, on whose prior opinion Mr. Vinson so heavily leaned.

It must be remembered that it is the function of the Court, as all good Holmesians allow, not to pass judgment on the wisdom of law, but only on its subscription to the Constitution. That is all the Court had to decide. It was under no obligation to explain its decision. Nonetheless it chose to do just that. It is not so much the decision, but the explanation which has caught the fire of "liberal" criticism. Let us look at that explanation.

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BRIEFLY, the Chief Justice, following the lead of Learned Hand, held that the Communists did teach and advocate the overthrow of our government, and did intend to overthrow it, "as speedily as circumstances would permit." The Chief Justice adopted Justice Hand's revision of the clear and present danger test: "in such case [courts] must ask whether the gravity of the 'evil,' discounted by its improbability justified such invasion of free speech as is necessary to avoid the danger."

By both Mr. Vinson and Mr. Hand our Communists' teaching—their words—were related to world events. The Chief Justice did not disagree with Justice Hand that: "we must be sensitive to the dangers that lurk in any choice, but choose we must." The Chief Justice wrote that "it is the existence of the conspiracy which creates the danger." And, "if the ingredients of the reaction are present, we cannot bind the Government to wait until the catalyst is added."

I think that the Smith Act is an unwise piece of legislation. I think that it puts too great a strain upon the use of language, and too great a strain upon our Courts. I think it was almost too much to expect that our Courts would be free from what Mr. Justice Black called "presten pressures, passions and fears."

I think that our Communists do, indeed, constitute a conspiracy. They are more than the expression of a heresy in the midst of the orthodoxy of our system of political belief. Never before have we had to deal with a group who are the servile lackeys, and the almost mindless puppets of a foreign and terroristic nation. I agree that they wish and intend to destroy us. I agree with Justice Jackson's remarks (in the Douds' Case) that "nothing exceeds the bitterness of their demands for freedom for themselves in this country except the bitterness of their intolerance of freedom for others when they are in power." Even out of power, they approved the Smith Act when, in 1943, it was used to jail some Trotskyites.

I happen to disagree with the Supreme Court, and with Justice Hand, when they say that we are in present danger from our Communists' intention. I do not think they can overthrow our government; in any event, not by their words or ideas. But, as Justice Hand put it, "all prophecy is a guess." If men, wiser than I, think the Communists are a grave present danger to our existence, then I think that the preventive legislation ought to rest not on the Communists' use of words, but on their deeds.

It must be remembered that the Communist conspiracy, in this case, was inferred from their use of language. As Justice Jackson put it: "There is no charge of actual violence or attempts to overthrow." I think actual criminal conspiracy can easily be proved against our Communists. I think free speech has been offended by the Smith Act. I do not think that freedom of speech should be risked so unnecessarily. I am impressed with Justice Jackson's statement that: "No doctrine can be sound whose application requires us to make a prophecy of that sort in the guise of a legal decision. . . . The authors of the clear and present danger test never applied it to a case like this, nor would I."

FRANCIS DOWNING.

The Stage

GOOD INTENTIONS

PROFESSIONAL critics are supposed to be an unsentimental lot, unmoved by considerations other than the quality of the play which is set before them. And it is perfectly true that they are able to withstand the emotionalism of enthusiastic and often self-interested first-nighters: a good many times per season the critic must make his way out of a theatre ringing with applause, go to his office, and forcing himself to some kind of calm objectivity, write a thoroughly bad notice.

The curious thing is that, come the end of the season and the time for handing out awards, many a critic finds himself suddenly choked up by what he now recognizes as conspicuous good will and noble endeavor on the part of playwrights and producers whose work he has earlier, and honestly, found wanting; whereupon he winds up voting the palm to a play which, at first hearing, bored him to death.

It seems to me that virtue—in the sense of good intentions, rather than actual theatrical merit—has swept the field this season. The Critics' Circle—and a number of lesser organizations—found "Darkness at Noon" the year's best play. "Billy Budd" received the largest number of votes for the next-best play. Both are cases in point.

As a dramatization of Arthur Koestler's novel, "Darkness at Noon" is a complete failure: it misses the point of the book, and it makes hash of the method of the book. As a play, as a piece of suspenseful dramaturgy,

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it runs steadily downhill. As writing, it is only a little above hack work. What has given it its pre-eminence in the seasonal voting is the fact that its heart is in the right place, and this seems to me to be a sentimental and entirely extra-curricular consideration. The play is anti-Communist—though its precise criticism of Communism is never very clearly dramatized—and nowadays men of good will are inclined to show their good will by bending over backward in favor of whatever is politically desirable. This is understandable, but I doubt that it is wise: so far as I know, no art form has ever benefited from politically-motivated support; what political good may be done by unclear and fatiguing dramaturgy, I cannot imagine; and audiences, already distrustful of the theatre, are not likely to be won back in large numbers by being urged to see something which is pretty nearly bound to disappoint them. In the long run, excessive enthusiasm for what is at best a second-rate play tends to equate the American critical faculty with that operating out of *Pravda,* a newspaper which no doubt gave its seasonal award to a similarly political and similarly unsatisfactory piece of playwriting.

The secondary award to "Billy Budd" was, I think, motivated by a different kind of sentimentality. The producers had put up a game battle to keep it alive; it was a play without pretense to commercial slickness; it was a serious-minded and very ambitious attempt to dramatize an American novel of some stature. It was, in short, 'worthy.' It was also clumsy in structure, two-dimensional in characterization, muddy in thought, monotonous in tone, and everywhere verbal in the literary rather than in the dramatic sense. Most of the original notices had been bad; but the self-sacrificing efforts of company and management to prolong the run, plus the fact that the authors had obviously shot at something higher than "Edwina Black," gradually altered the critical atmosphere.

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THE latter-day and second-guessing admiration for "Billy Budd" seems to me even more damaging to the theatre than that for "Darkness at Noon." A number of theatregoers have undoubtedly been able to talk themselves into liking "Darkness at Noon," largely because they want so much to hear things said: they are as willing to be moved by extra-curricular sentiment as the critics who sent them. But I find it hard to believe that many members of the "Billy Budd" audience were able to perform this feat of self-hypnosis, and I am afraid that at the very time when we are making a desperate effort to lure an audience into the legitimate theatre we are also urging them to attend the kind of play which is calculated to discourage them forever.

Contemporary audiences do abide by professional critical opinion. And I suspect that the tentative playgoer who made his first two experimental approaches to the theatre on the basis of this year's Critics' Circle awards is probably at home in front of his TV set tonight. He is himself sentimental about his money and his time.

WALTER KERR.

The Screen

HOW STARK CAN YOU GET?

A MOVIE like Billy Wilder's new opus *"Ace in the Hole"* represents the ultimate in cinematic technique. Its beautiful photography, its good on-the-spot New Mexico sets, its cast that is practically perfect not only in the lead roles but in the hundreds of bit performances that add so much to the revealing whole, and its well-written script all work together to show that Wilder (who also had a hand in the screenplay) certainly knows how to make a movie. Another actual proof of this wasn't necessary; his direction of "Sunset Boulevard" and "The Lost Weekend" had already convinced the critics and the paying customers. But this time Mr. Wilder goes a little further in rubbing our noses in the dirt, as he shows man's inhumanity to man. The realism in "Sunset" and "Lost Weekend" was hard to take, but in "Ace in the Hole" Wilder pushes his stark realism so far that we are almost left, at the film's end, face downward, smothered like the victim of the central character's heartless machinations.

The story is built around a reporter who has been blackballed from most of the big papers throughout the country. He's a good reporter, so he lands a job on a small sheet in Albuquerque where he works hard for a year waiting for his chance to impress the big-time editors who fired him. He sees his big opportunity when a man who runs a roadside tourist shop gets buried deep in an Indian cliff dwelling. The reporter hopes he has another Floyd Collins story (with an added King Tut twist—because of the superstitious Indians) and he manages to delay the rescue long enough for him to write a series of articles playing up the human-interest and the morbid angles. The buried man's wife, a cheap, blond floozy, who's been wanting to run away from her husband, is finally willing to cooperate when she sees in the ruthless reporter and his sensational journalism a means of escape for herself. So that is the basis for this realistically visualized tale that gets out of hand when dirty politics is dragged in in the person of a vicious sheriff who becomes a tool of the reporter and when curiosity-hungry crowds turn the ancient cliff-dwelling site into a tawdry carnival camp complete with ferris wheel, a re-election sign for the sheriff, hamburgers sold by the buried man's wife, and even a helicopter to give the morbid sight-seers a better view.

As the reporter, Kirk Douglas gives a flawless performance in the contempt-for-people school. He probably would bite a dog to make news, and when the chance presents itself to keep the buried man buried for a week or longer, he thinks only of himself and his ambitions as he takes advantage of the buried man, the wife, the sheriff and the mean-minded crowds who slobber greedily over the tragedy that is being enacted before their eyes. Jan Sterling is also perfect as the buried man's self-cen-

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tered wife; and Ray Teal is equally impressive as the sheriff who is more than willing to use the reporter and the whole carnival atmosphere as a means to re-election. As you watch this picture continue on its bitter way, you begin to wander if the reporter is any worse than the pitiless characters around him or even if he is any more immoral than the curiosity-seeking crowd, who, like the people on the streets in "Fourteen Hours" with their impatient watching of the man on the ledge, seem to be hoping for disaster, almost preferring that, it would seem, to rescue.

Billy Wilder doesn't editorialize, he just reports with a very accurate, revealing camera; and he stirs up our dislike for those people so strongly that we wonder how he will get us out of this fix. The conclusion becomes rather melodramatic when the reporter finally does show a heart.

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THERE'S realism in *"The Frogmen"* too, but realism of a documentary sort. Although the plot has almost become a cliche ever since "Command Decision" and "Twelve O'Clock High"—the one in which the commanding officer has to make the decisions that may send a few of his men to death but will eventually save hundreds in the big battle—this same plot in "The Frogmen" is used only as a thread to connect the characters. Our main interest is in the Underwater Demolition Team, the collective hero of the film. Fortunately the script does not attempt that other cliche of today's war pictures of giving us a cross-section view of these men. We learn a little about them, but their work as a group is what fascinates us, and since most of this work is new to movie audiences and since it has been photographed so well, the picture holds us spellbound throughout its entire hour-and-a-half running time. In the first part, we see our battling mermen in swimming trunks, oversized goggles and finny rubber shoes doing underwater reconnaisance near the shore of a Japanese-held island in the Pacific. The whole procedure is exciting to watch as the men get out of the launch into a rubber raft and then flop into the water where they swim to examine the traps set up by the enemy. They draw maps and diagrams, bomb some of the snares, and generally go about preparing the ocean bottom as best they can for the coming invasion.

"The Frogmen" is the kind of a picture that will hold youngsters and oldsters alike. The story, which has no love stuff, is never carried too far. Richard Widmark gives a fine performance as the officer who is pretty strict on rules, but always right when it comes to the important descision. Dana Andrews portrays the leader of the men who rebel against Widmark's seemingly heartless commands; and Gary Merrill is the commander on the destroyer taking the team to its work. The final shots of the film showing this team (wearing the rubber suits that gave them the name of Frogmen) blowing up a submarine pen off of Japan are thrilling—but so is the whole film. Don't miss it.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Of Note

Abbot Alcuin

THE current issue of *Orate Fratres* (Collegeville, Minnesota) carries a tribute to the late Abbot Alcuin Deutsch, O.S.B., of St. John's Abbey. It is written by Dom Godfrey L. Diekmann, editor of the liturgical review.

> There can be little question that Abbott Alcuin was one of the great abbots of modern times, and the fact was recognized internationally in the whole Order, and beyond. He was a man of authority, fully conscious of the responsibility of leadership which the Rule of St. Benedict imposes on an abbot. He frankly chafed, at times, under the restrictions which historical developments had placed on that authority. But his assertion of abbatial command did not have its roots in self-seeking. When, on the occasion of his silver jubilee as abbot, the Bishop of the diocese sought to secure for him the privilege of the violet skull-cap, it was discovered that he had already received that distinction years earlier, but had declined to make use of it.
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> No one in recent history, certainly, surpassed him as benefactor of the [Benedictine] Order; and the charitable relief of the destitute in Europe to which he inspired his community both after the first and the Second World War, and his generous support of missions everywhere, is a chapter all the more glorious for not being published. For the sake of such charity, Abbot Alcuin was willing to sacrifice even his cherished life-long dream of building a worthy abbey church. For the sake of charity, too, he three times undertook, at papal request, the difficult task of reorganizing other monasteries faced by collapse, though it meant that the men and money required in each case postponed for some twenty years original foundations which he was eager to establish from St. John's.
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> Towards the end of his rule, he did have the happiness of initiating such foundations, five of them! —in the Bahamas, Puerto Rico, Mexico, Japan, and Kentucky (an interracial monastery).
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> He pioneered as a matter of course. St. John's Abbey itself has been an interracial monastery since 1941; and the university of which he was rector and later president has had Negro resident students since the early 20's. I can personally vouch for it, moreover, that during the years of my editorship of *O.F.*, since 1938, he never once criticized either editor or articles for being too "revolutionary," despite letters of complaint that reached him to that effect. If the ideas were sound, he was for them, however unconventional. He also believed strongly in lay Catholic journalism and supported it. The principle of authority was sacred to him; but he at the same time expected lay initiative; he trusted the laity. . . .

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Freedom of, by, and for the Press

By DONALD McDONALD

MY DAILY newspaper fare is the Davenport *Daily Times,* the Des Moines *Register* and the New York *Times.* On an occasional Sunday I pick up the Chicago *Tribune* to see what Publisher McCormick's puppets are doing to the truth. From the Davenport paper, I get the weather report (quite accurate) and I used to get Walter Lippmann's essays. The *Register* is a morning paper which supplies fresh baseball scores plus an occasional first-rate local story (e.g., the case of the public school teacher intimidated by the Boone, Iowa school board because he had enrolled his son in a parochial school.) The New York *Times* remains pretty much the newspaper of record and, from what I can gather, will continue to be admired and respected by other editors, but never imitated.

With this limited (but I suspect typical) experience with the daily press, I find it difficult to agree with George L. Bird and Frederic E. Merwin, the editors of *The Press and Society* (*Prentice-Hall.* $6.50) who state in their introduction to this compilation of readings that "the recent studies of the press . . . show an increasing strength of the press as well as increased freedom."

If by "strength" Messrs. Bird and Merwin mean effective reporting of significant truth neither the studies in this book nor the performance of the general press supports the judgment. The fact is that readers who rely exclusively on the Davenport or Des Moines papers for their information are unequipped for responsible political and social action, while readers of a paper with a positive bias, such as the Chicago *Tribune,* have completely lost contact with political reality.

But if by "strength" the editors mean "might" or "circulation success," their statement is correct, but also irrelevant. The measure of quality in a newspaper is the extent to which it publishes information which readers need both as individual persons and as potential, responsible contributors to the common good and to the political wisdom of their society.

James S. Pope, managing editor of the Louisville *Courier-Journal,* and one of the few working newsmen acutely critical of the American press, understands and makes the above point in the editors' selection from the Nieman Reports, "The Main Function of the Press." Writes Mr. Pope: "There is only one function which justifies the exalted protection given the press in our Constitution: that is as a common carrier of information. The conveying of this information is vital for a manifest reason: people who govern themselves have to know the score. Nevertheless, hundreds of newspapers habitually carry this information, this news so essential to the life of a democracy, in the most horribly butchered and distorted form, as something stuffed into the paper where a hole occurs, and the less holes the better. These papers feel many compulsions, but not the compulsion to give their readers a comprehensive and balanced picture of what goes on . . . Most do surely feel the compulsion to make money. Too many of them use news merely to plug gaps in their advertising; it is rare that news space on these papers is altered to fit the flow of copy after dummies are laid out in the advertising department, unless some overwhelming event comes along." The authors of the Bill of Rights, observes Mr. Pope, "seemed to assume that no editor in a democracy would ever throw away significant news merely to get in another ad for a New Look."

★

THE BULK of the criticism of the press found in this collection comes from the universities and research centers. The absence of editors' and publishers' self-criticism is itself a commentary on the press' irresponsibility towards the good of readers. I recall reading in *Editor and Publisher* a few years ago an account of an editors' meeting at which one newsman whose ethic was still sensitive, suggested that the society throw out "all the stinkers." One frightened Middle Western editor jumped to his feet and asked: "But how can we determine who are the stinkers?" Apparently this was a pretty tough question since the discussion ended at that point.

The Press and Society is roughly divided, not formally but materially, into criticism of the press and apologetics for the status quo. Much of the criticism selected by the authors is pointed; most of the apologetics is thin, frequently foolish. In the latter category, for example, Professor Thomas A. Bailey of Stanford moves the responsibility for American journalism as we know it from the editors and publishers to the readers who "demand only comics, murders, sex scandals and sports . . . In the last analysis," he writes, "the defects of the newspaper are in large measure attributable to the reader, for the editors, like other businessmen, aim to please the customer." Professor Bailey believes the American press will improve when "we raise the educational and critical level of the people."

A more accurate prophecy, I believe, is that the educational and critical level of the people will be raised *after* the American press gets out of the muck. After all, who brought comic strips into being: the people? or Messrs. Hearst and Pulitzer at the turn of the century? For the majority of the American people, their only consistent contact with intellectuality is the daily newspaper, their attitudes, habits and tastes are conditioned to a considerable extent by their newspaper. In a recent edition of the Chicago *Daily News,* the editor disclosed in a flaming front-page banner headline: SOX WIN TWO FOR 14 IN ROW. That editor was giving his readers a judgment of news values; nobody, I dare say, demanded that he make the judgment the way it was made.

DONALD McDONALD is on the editorial staff of the Davenport Catholic Messenger.

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A great many people, including editors who think the freedom of the press means the freedom to make profits, are telling us these days that American newspaper readers have a moronic intelligence and vicious appetites. I have no doubt that if we continue to be exposed to newspapers published on that premise, we will be reduced eventually to that condition.

But as late as 1949, Professor Charles E. Swanson of the University of Minnesota discovered in a survey (included in this book) that out of 1,826 newspaper readers, half of them said they expected their newspaper to "stand for what I think is the public interest" and "to print enough news to keep me adequately informed." The rest of the readers gave other notions of what a newspaper should be: that it should "conform to standards of decency and good taste, print both sides of an issue, be accurate and truthful . . ."

One essay, in particular, fascinated me in *The Press and Society*. It was "Advertising Speaks on Its Own Behalf," written in 1929 by Frank Presbrey, an advertising executive. From Mr. Presbrey, I learned, among other things, that: (1) "advertising is a civilizing influence comparable in its cultural effects to those of other great epoch-making developments in history;" (2) "some future 'History of Civilization' perhaps will give advertising credit as the power that in the nineteenth century began to make a large part of the world so speedily a more comfortable sphere for the human family to be on . . .;" (3) advertising leads each of us to "produce more in order to gratify our own desire for new comforts and pleasures, with the result of a higher standard of living all around . . . ;" (4) "the high grade of pictorial art which is an outstanding feature of modern advertising has made the physical form of advertising itself an influence for development of taste in art;" (5) "advertising probably is our greatest agency for spreading an understanding and love of beauty of all things;" (6) that the "millions of porcelain tubs and the self-respect they engender in their possessor were put into homes of all classes as a result of advertising [and] on this one item alone advertising has earned its place as a powerful instrument for raising the common level of refinement . . ."

★

BIRD and Merwin have done a good job in compiling *The Press and Society*. The book is a revised edition of their *Newspaper and Society*, and it includes significant postwar criticism and studies of the American press, embracing newspapers and radio. A number of selections have been made from the Hutchins' report (the Freedom of the Press Commission's findings at the University of Chicago), the Nieman Reports, Herbert Brucker's *Freedom of Information*, and a brief excerpt from one of A. J. Liebling's "Wayward Press" series in *The New Yorker*.

It is probably too much to expect that the majority of the working press, the editors and publishers will either welcome this collection of essays or allow themselves to be governed by some of its criticism. In that judgment I hope I will be proved wrong.

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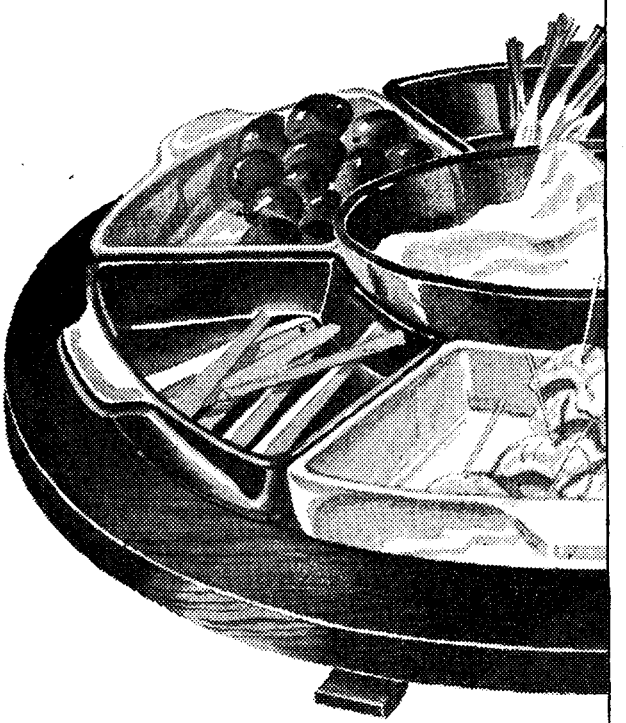

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Books

The State of Asia: A Contemporary Survey. Lawrence K. Rosinger and Associates. Knopf. $6.

IN SPITE of the tremendous importance of the Far East in the world of today, the average American knows far too little about it. The arguments which he hears as to what American policy in the Far East should be are generally based on opinion rather than fact, emotion rather than reason, and in the absence of adequate and readily available books on the area he has been left to flounder in darkness. Mr. Rosinger's book should do much to dispel that darkness; it is the best general work on the postwar Far East yet published.

Unlike some of his less competent colleagues, Mr. Rosinger apparently realizes that neither he nor any one else is qualified to survey recent events in the whole of the vast region stretching from India to Japan. He himself has contributed three chapters to the book—a good introductory survey, an excellent chapter on China, and a somewhat less satisfying one on India. Each of the other major Far Eastern areas, except for Ceylon and the Soviet Far East, is treated by a recognized authority on that area. Each chapter contains enough introductory material to enable the reader to understand the main theme, which is the political and economic history of the area since the Second World War. The chapters are factual rather than interpretative, and their general quality is good.

The picture which emerges from this excellent book is one of masses of people struggling desperately, sometimes blindly, against their ancient enemies, poverty, disease, illiteracy, and oppression. They welcome aid in this struggle, regardless of the political complexion of the source from which it comes. They tend to distrust the real or fancied imperialism of the West, which they have experienced, more than the terribly real imperialism of Moscow, of which they know relatively little.

From the viewpoint of the United States, the danger in this situation is that the non-Communist governments of the Far East may prove too unstable and too undemocratic to offer effective resistance to Communist penetration. They cannot take centuries, as we did in the West, to build up an educated public, a reasonably honest and efficient civil service, civil liberties, parliamentary institutions, modern armed forces, and a stable economy. These things must be achieved very soon, or they may never be achieved at all. Their achievement will probably require a judicious combination of American aid and American pressure, applied on a larger scale and with greater skill than ever before. Mere anti-Communism is not enough; some alternative must be offered, and it is difficult to see how that alternative can be anything but Christianity. Otherwise the choice which the peoples of the Far East must make may be made without a full realization of the nature of the struggle on whose outcome their survival, and ours, depend.

HAROLD C. HINTON.

Pantomime. A Journal of Rehearsals. Wallace Fowlie. Regnery. $3.50.

MR. FOWLIE'S reminiscences are those of a cultured gentleman who has carefully filtered his past, beginning in Boston, going through Harvard, to France, and finally back to America, into an artistic and literary experience. But the author, a New Englander by birth and a Frenchman by adoption, has succeeded in doing something more: he has made a usually deadening experience, the story of getting a Ph.D., into the high spot of his book. For the best parts of the work are his accounts of conversations with Gide, Maritain, Mme. Renan, Mme. Psichari, all those with whom he first came into contact when studying for his doctorate.

Happily, the author's learning is balanced by what is probably a predisposition to charity. In the same way that he can recall his college professors only in terms of Andre Morize and Irving Babbitt, of whom he speaks in respectful and admiring tone, so, of his acquaintanances in France, he recalls only those who are charming and penetrating and mentally alert. Gide and Maritain may disagree over the merits of Ernest Psichari; Mme. Renan and Claudel may disagree over a number of things; but that does not prevent the experience of meeting and talking to them from being a stimulating one. Consequently, if the reader does not happen to know other writings of Mr. Fowlie, he will remain at a loss as to the author's center. Such intellectual anonymity is what Mr. Fowlie seeks. He considers himself a spectator, a person playing different parts throughout life. He feels himself strongly attracted to the clown, "unashamedly awkward, exalted by the noblest dreams and always tricked in some way before touching the reality of his dream."

And his reminiscences, like his interpretation of the clown, completely lack irresponsible spontaneity, a healthy sense of malice, and a reassuring arrogance: traits indispensable to the true clown. If Mr. Fowlie were the least bit fairer or more poised and gentle, he would be dull. But perhaps it is all a matter of poor timing in publication. Present headlines do make it difficult to appreciate elegiac memoirs.

SERGE HUGHES.

The Hospital. Frederick Boyden. Farrar, Straus and Young. $3.

IF YOU will pardon Mr. Boyden and me, we will play an old record. War is not so tough on the men who get killed. After it's all over, it's not so bad for those who come back whole. It's rather glamorous for those who can wear the uniforms and eye the pretty girls without themselves going into combat.

War is terrible for those who come back in pieces. *The Hospital* is about the patients in the plastic surgery

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ward of an Army hospital. The characters are men who have lost their faces and limbs in war. They don't have noses or ears or eyebrows or hair. (The mother of one of them "had not believed that a person could look so horrible and live.") They endure operation after operation. They spend weeks with their arms bound in awkward positions, waiting for flesh to attach itself to a noseless face. They take it all, but know that when the years of operations are over, people will still stare in the opposite direction when they board a train. So they live most of the time without real hope, either knowing within themselves that what they pretend is hope is really fantasy (and they go on pretending that it is hope); or they grimly tear away from life the fragments of satisfaction they can get: liquor, a girl, any girl. For the rest, they take it all as patronizing charity, or as pity.

So the book is about hopelessness. It is fundamentally well written and well conceived. It is marred by a determined concern with detail—not just significant detail, all detail.

A novel is supposed to have a certain kind of life. *The Hospital* is like a photograph. One might say that it is a clear, memorable photograph of mutilated men. But as a novelist, Mr. Boyden must give more than a photo. The remembered objects and details that are in the picture with these men must affect these men, enter into and change them. The men should move. I want to see these men from several sides, and see how a year of life develops or destroys them. When Karl goes to New York I want Mr. Boyden to get out of the way and let me see what he does—I don't want to be told. As Mr. Boyden has it, the men don't change—circumstances change. A year of happenings pass by, but the men are motionless. If the reader is interested in anything it is the men; but he gets more of a calendar than a diary.

A reason that the figures are so lifeless is that, as I said before, they are hopeless. In a backhanded way this book is quite a sermon on hope. As things are with these men, life, beauty and happiness were irrevocably burnt away in the fire which burnt away their faces. Whatever they manage to find will be as artificial as the face that is remade for them. For the present, it is operations, pentothal, ether, pain, and hospital hallways and wards, white and scrubbed. WILLIAM PFAFF.

The Troubled Air. Irwin Shaw. Random. $3.75.

WE ARE concerned here with the civil rights of radio-drama-director Clement Archer and his fellow workers; we are concerned here with the validity and effective meaning of the Bill of Rights in the USA and with the rights of man everywhere.

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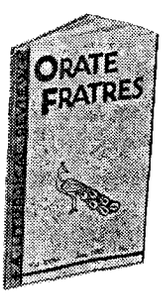

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Clement Archer can agree—this, without hint of subscription to the speaker's political and social outlook. To what must we be loyal, the Communist asks: "to the concepts of individual conscience and the right to disagree or to the narrow and intolerant doctrine of hatred and fear which is sweeping the country today and which will lead us all into war and total silence?"

"Total silence" — a marvelous phrase—packed with deeper meaning for humanity than "total war" or "total diplomacy."

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The Clement Archer of this book, in defending the human dignity of his fellow entertainers against the contumacious blacklist of an irresponsible anti-Communist magazine, fights the fight of universal man.

He does this, it is true, because they are his friends and fellow workers. Yet even more powerfully motivating is his unshakable conviction that they are accused irresponsibly and are innocent until proven guilty.

He rubs his bald-spot, placating, with deep charity, his neurotic wife and boy-crazy daughter who will be indirect victims of his self-sacrifice. He is betrayed by his best friend—who does turn out to be a Commie—and he is slandered in the press and over the phone, bled financially, framed and fired. But he cleaves to the ideal and principle of civil rights in a democracy.

Irwin Shaw knows his material and his meaning with x-ray insight, making exciting drama out of preachment, when necessary, yet never unmindful that a novelist's first duty is to entertain. If contrivances are not to your taste, you may find distaste here. But Shaw camouflages contrivances with the drapes of reality as well as any writer living.

JOE DEVER.

Alcuin, Friend of Charlemagne. Eleanor S. Duckett. Macmillan. $5.

MISS DUCKETT has given us the first biography of Alcuin in English since Gaskoin's study, which dates from 1904. Hers is a story well worth the retelling and few will take it up without profit.

The bulk of the man's activity was expended in England, where he was born toward 735, and in the Frankish domains, where he died at Tours in 804. In a sense, he spans two ages, for his fifty years at York were lived in the shadow of the monk Bede (himself the final prolongation of the patristic period), while the last twenty-odd years of his life were passed in intimacy with Charlemagne in whom the Christian medieval empire finds its wellhead. Kleinclausz, his latest French biographer, has said of Alcuin that, lacking him, Charlemagne would have been less great. Without him, too, the Christian West would have been the poorer, for Alcuin fashioned the first Renaissance and his Sacramentary has settled the

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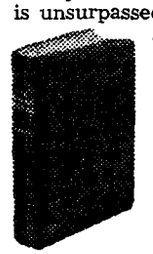

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structure and tenor of the Roman liturgy since his day.

Those who have read her "Anglo-Saxon Saints and Scholars" will not be surprised to find Miss Duckett at home in the literary output of her subject and able to weave segments therefrom skillfully into her narrative. She pays heed to all of Alcuin's varied interests—to his love for Scripture and to his delight in wine—and captures not only the man's attractiveness but much of the spirit of his times. Her phrasing has a pleasant turn and her reading has been wide.

Still, it is only right to note that she works otherwise than the trained historian. That shows itself in little ways. An historian would have observed, no doubt, that the reference in the Northumbrian synod of 786 to canons who lived canonically is our earliest evidence for canons in England and he would have called attention to Morhain's article in the "Miscellanea Pio Paschini" (1948) when speaking of St. Chrodegang's Rule. He would not have attempted a summary of the Lombard Plot of 771 without making mention of Bertolini's study in the 1947 *Rivista di Storia della Chiesa in Italia*. Yet it is also possible that he would have lacked Miss Duckett's flair for color. As her book stands, it is human as well as erudite and should prove fascinating to those who yearn to know something of the dynamic world that was the early Middle Ages.

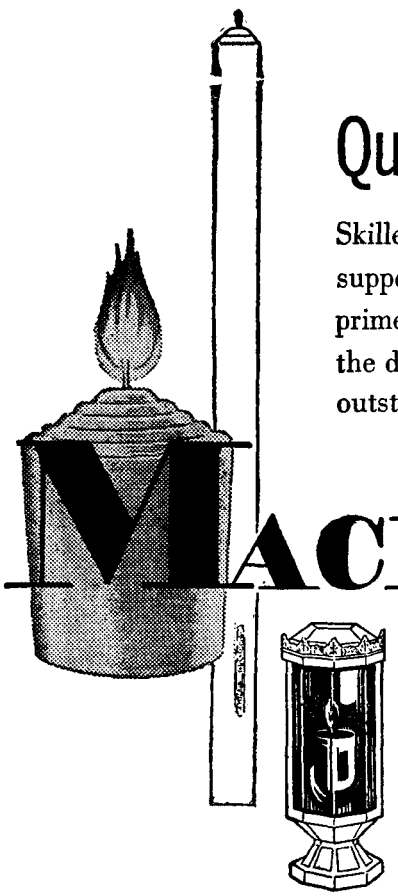
HENRY G. J. BECK.

This Is The Hour. Lion Feuchtwanger. Viking. $3.95.

THE writer of *Jew Suss* and *The Ugly Duchess* has attempted to recreate the personality of the Spanish painter, Goya, and the events and customs which served as a background for the artist's work. In an ill-titled book with a gossipy, episodic story, certain published facts about Goya are embellished with fictional suppositions and decorations. In addition to posterior evaluations of Goya and the Duchess of Alba, Carlos and Maria Luisa and Don Manuel Godoy there are numerous judgments of the political and clerical conditions of the days in which Goya lived and painted and played.

To judge from Feuchtwanger's story the greatest part of Goya's life was spent playing or contemplating possible sexual play with ladies of that day. It is difficult to concede that Goya's preoccupations were what this story has them to be, and it is unlikely that the characterizations of the other historical figures proceed logically from the natures of the real people. The entire book has a distinct taste of unreality and its representations of characters give it a comic-strip quality. (Carlos, for example, is shown as a complete boob, Maria Luisa as only a perpetually lust-ridden woman).

In addition the use of the conventional items, the repeated insertion of a few Spanish words, the obvious anti-Inquisition belaboring, all promote an effect of mediocrity. Moreover the evaluations of Goya's paintings are exaggerated and ill-founded.



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The book has the tone of a large general history text; it is, without doubt, pointed toward the groups of people who love "historical" novels.

GEORGE MILES.

The New Turks. Eleanor Bisbee. University of Pennsylvania Press. $5.

THIS is an informative, though highly apologetic, survey of the three decades of the new Turkish national state. The author, a former journalist, spent six years in Turkey teaching philosophy at two American colleges. Since she did not know the old Orient, she has not resented its decay. Her book presents only the valuable features of the new Turkish life; she thinks that the new Turks are "pioneers," like the Americans. But she is at least fair enough to admit that in the beginning the philosophical teaching of the new state was a very naive positivism that will have to be outgrown. Unfortunately, she fails to present a bright picture of the various trends of thought in present-day Turkey.

The Turks will be very pleased with this amiable book that makes easy reading. Almost everything is seen through rosy glasses. In Miss Bisbee's presentation Kemal Atatürk remains the hero and not the man whom this reviewer met in the late twenties, the man with the all-too-human features.

MAX FISCHER.

Saint Augustine: Commentary on the Lord's Sermon on the Mount with Seventeen Related Sermons. Translated by Denis J. Kavanaugh, O.S.A. *Fathers of the Church, Inc.* $5.

THIS is the latest of a projected series of 72 volumes of patristic writings. The sermons here are presented in English for the first time and were specially chosen because they relate to the Sermon on the Mount. Father Kavanagh points out that Saint Augustine was the model for preachers, as well as philosophers, in the Middle Ages.

•REVIEWERS•

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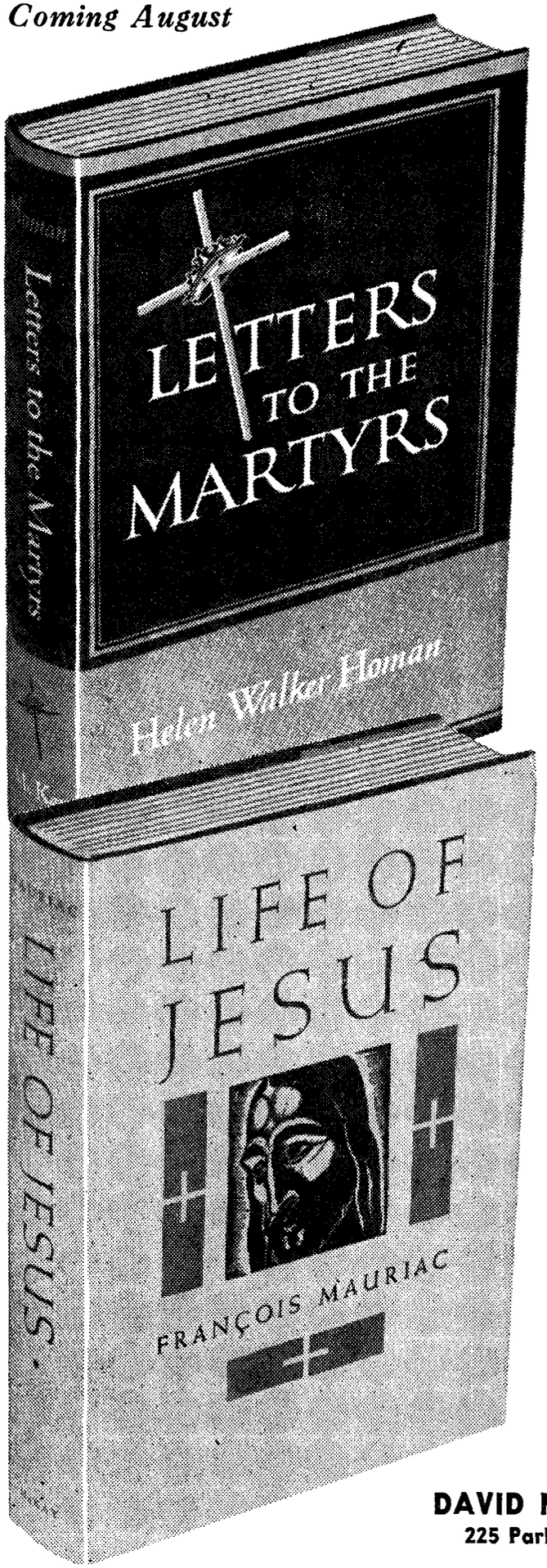

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